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CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A method for assessing a supplier's compliance with a customer's contract terms, conditions, and applicable regulations, comprising the steps of:
 - 5 identifying a complete set of compliance provisions from contract terms, conditions, and applicable regulations for a customer's contract;
gathering supplier compliance information quantifying compliance by the supplier with the compliance provisions;
storing the supplier compliance information in a database that is accessible over a
10 network;
verifying the supplier compliance information using a verification provider in order to produce qualitative verification of supplier compliance information; and
facilitating customer access over the network to the supplier compliance information for the compliance provisions.
- 15 2. A method as in claim 1, wherein the step of verifying the supplier compliance information further comprises the step of assessing the correctness of portions of the supplier compliance information.
- 20 3. A method as in claim 1, wherein the step of verifying the supplier compliance information further comprises the step of comparing supplier compliance information with electronic databases containing information for confirming the supplier compliance information.
- 25 4. A method as in claim 1, wherein the step of verifying the supplier compliance information further comprises the step of comparing supplier compliance information with confirmation information obtained by human researchers to verify the supplier compliance information.
- 30 5. A method as in claim 1, wherein the step of identifying a complete set of contract terms further comprises the step of adding emerging business regulations as the business regulations become effective.

6. A method as in claim 1, wherein the step of facilitating customer access further comprises the step of providing reporting capabilities for the complete set of contract terms, conditions, and applicable regulations for the compliance provisions.

7. A method as in claim 1; further comprising the step of providing information regarding the supplier's compliance with a customer's contract terms, conditions and applicable regulations to both the supplier and the customer on an ongoing basis.

8. A method as in claim 1, further comprising the step of notifying a supplier of important compliance due dates that are about to expire and a relevant expiration date.

9. A method as in claim 1, further comprising the step of notifying a customer of important supplier due dates that are about to expire and a relevant expiration date.

10. A method as in claim 1, further comprising the step of organizing the supplier compliance information in a logical, consistent and easy to use format

11. A system for assessing a supplier's compliance with a customer's contract terms, conditions, and applicable regulations, comprising:

a customer having a contract with a plurality of compliance provisions identified from contract terms, conditions, and applicable regulations;

a supplier who has agreed to the contract with the customer;

a verification provider that is enabled to gather supplier compliance information related to the compliance provisions and enabled to verify the supplier compliance information in order to produce qualitative verification of the supplier compliance information;

a database configured for storing the supplier compliance information; and

a computer network configured for facilitating access by the customer over the network to the supplier compliance information for the compliance provisions.

12. A method for assessing supplier compliance with a customer's contract terms, conditions, and applicable regulations, comprising the steps of:

5 obtaining supplier information from a customer in order to collect supplier compliance information that includes the customer's contract terms, conditions, and applicable regulations for a supplier;

gathering supplier compliance information from suppliers who provide the supplier compliance information in order for the supplier to engage in further business with the customer;

10 charging the suppliers a periodic fee for verification of the supplier's compliance information;

verifying supplier compliance information using a verification provider to provide verified supplier compliance information; and

15 facilitating customer access to the verified supplier compliance information at no charge to the customer via a computer network.

13. A method as in claim 12, wherein the step of verifying the supplier compliance information further comprises the step of verifying supplier compliance information that includes a complete set of contract terms, conditions, and applicable regulations contained in a customer's contract with the supplier.

14. A method as in claim 12, further comprising the step of contacting the suppliers with a request to enter supplier compliance information into a verification database.

15. A method as in claim 14, wherein the step of contacting the suppliers further comprises the step of having the customer contact the suppliers with a request to enter supplier compliance information into the verification database.

16. A method as in claim 14, wherein the step of contacting the suppliers further comprises the step of contacting the suppliers using an official customer contact channel with a request to enter supplier compliance information into the verification database.

17. A method as in claim 14, wherein the step of contacting the suppliers further comprises the step of contacting the suppliers using a customer's official letterhead and signature of a customer's executive officer, with a request to enter the supplier compliance information into the verification database.

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18. A method as in claim 12, further comprising the step of contracting with the suppliers to receive the supplier compliance information which includes the supplier compliance with a customer's contract terms, conditions, and applicable regulations.

10 19. A method as in claim 12, wherein the step of charging the supplier a periodic fee further comprises the step of charging the supplier a periodic fee selected from the fees consisting of: a yearly fee, a semiannual fee, a quarterly fee and a monthly fee.

15 20. A method as in claim 12, further comprising the step of displaying exceptions regarding the supplier's compliance information to a customer that are not in compliance, while hiding compliance information that is in compliance.

21. A method of marketing a verification system for supplier compliance with a customer's contract terms, conditions, and applicable regulations, comprising the steps of:

20 involving an independent industry representative who is able to arrange a communication with a customer's senior level management;

 presenting the verification system for supplier compliance to the customer's senior level management based on the independent industry representative's involvement;

 collecting supplier compliance information from suppliers regarding compliance

25 with contract terms, conditions, and applicable regulations; and

 enrolling the suppliers in the verification system in order for the supplier to engage in further business with the customer

22. A method as in claim 21, further comprising the step of charging the suppliers a periodic

30 fee for enrollment in the verification system.

23. A method as in claim 21, further comprising the step of charging the suppliers of the customer a yearly fee for enrollment in the verification system.

24. A method as in claim 21, wherein the step of charging the suppliers a periodic fee further comprises the step of charging the suppliers a periodic fee for verification of the supplier compliance information.

5 25. A method as in claim 22, wherein the step of utilizing an independent industry representative further comprises the step of contracting with an independent industry representative to pay the independent industry representative a fee for arranging a meeting with a customer's senior level management.

10 26. A method as in claim 22, wherein the step of utilizing an independent industry representative further comprising the step of contracting with an independent industry representative to pay a commission on the periodic fees collected from the suppliers.

15 27. A method as in claim 21, further comprising the step of enabling customer electronic access to the supplier compliance information at no charge to the customer.

20 28. A method as in claim 21, wherein the step of utilizing an independent industry representative further comprises the step of contracting with an independent industry representative that is a former senior executive with senior executive management contacts.

25 29. A method as in claim 21, wherein the step of utilizing an independent industry representative further comprises the step of contracting with an independent industry representative that is a current senior executive with senior executive management contacts.

30. A method as in claim 21, wherein the step of enrolling the suppliers further comprises the steps of:

30 contacting the suppliers with a request to enter supplier compliance information into an electronic verification database in order to remain on a supplier's customer list;

contracting with the suppliers to receive the supplier compliance information which includes the supplier's compliance with contract terms, conditions, and applicable regulations of a customer;

verifying the supplier compliance information;
charging the suppliers a periodic fee for the verification and storage of the verified
supplier compliance information;
enabling the customer to access verified supplier compliance information stored in
5 the electronic verification system at no charge to the customer.

31. A method as in claim 21, further comprising the step of receiving a supplier list from the
customer.

10 32. A method as in claim 31, further comprising the step of using the customer's official
correspondence channel in order to contact the suppliers on the supplier list.

33. A method as in claim 31, further comprising the step of contacting pre-determined
portions of the suppliers on the supply list during one year until all the suppliers are
15 contacted.

34. A method as in claim 21, further comprising the step of agreeing with a customer to
require suppliers to sign up for the supplier compliance program in order to maintain a
supplier relationship with the customer.

20 35. A method as in claim 21, further comprising the step of enrolling suppliers who the
customer designates as minor suppliers at no charge to the supplier.

36. A method as in claim 34, further comprising the step of scanning in the minor supplier
25 information without verification.

37. A method as in claim 34, further comprising the step of displaying exceptions in the
supplier's compliance information that are not in compliance, while hiding compliance
information that is in compliance.

30 38. A method for assessing a supplier's compliance with a customer's contract terms,
conditions, and applicable regulations, comprising the steps of:
identifying a plurality of compliance provisions from contract terms, conditions,
and applicable regulations for a customer's contract;

gathering supplier compliance information quantifying compliance by the supplier with the compliance provisions;

storing the supplier compliance information in a database that is accessible over a network;

- 5 verifying the supplier compliance information using a verification provider in order to produce qualitative verification of supplier compliance information; and
 facilitating customer access over the network to the supplier compliance information for the compliance provisions.

10 39. A method for assessing supplier compliance with a customer's contract terms, conditions, and applicable regulations, comprising the steps of:

 obtaining supplier compliance information specified by a customer that includes the customer's contract terms, conditions, and applicable regulations for a supplier;

 gathering supplier compliance information from suppliers who provide the
15 supplier compliance information to be further qualified to be engaged in business with the customer;

 charging the suppliers a periodic fee for verification of the supplier's compliance information;

 verifying supplier compliance information using a verification provider to provide
20 verified supplier compliance information; and

 facilitating customer access to the verified supplier compliance information at no charge to the customer via a computer network.

40. A method as in claim 39, wherein the step of verifying the supplier compliance
25 information further comprises the step of verifying supplier compliance information that includes contract terms, conditions, and applicable regulations contained in a customer's contract with the supplier as specified by a customer.

41. A method as in claim 39, wherein the step of charging the suppliers a periodic fee further
30 comprises the step of charging the suppliers a yearly fee for ongoing verification of the supplier's compliance information.

42. A method for assessing supplier compliance with a customer's contract terms, conditions, and applicable regulations, comprising the steps of:

obtaining supplier information from a customer in order to collect supplier compliance information that includes the customer's contract terms, conditions, and applicable regulations for a supplier;

5 gathering supplier compliance information from suppliers who provide the supplier compliance information in order for the supplier to engage in further business with the customer;

charging the suppliers a periodic fee for verification of the supplier's compliance information;

10 verifying supplier compliance information using a verification provider to provide verified supplier compliance information;

facilitating customer access to the verified supplier compliance information at no charge to the customer via a computer network; and

displaying exceptions regarding the supplier's compliance information to a customer.

15 43. A method as in claim 42, wherein the step of displaying exceptions further comprises the step of displaying exceptions that are not in compliance, while hiding compliance information that is not in compliance.

20 44. A method as in claim 42, wherein the step of displaying exceptions further comprises the step of displaying exceptions to the compliance information with a red icon and compliance information that is verified for correctness with a green icon.